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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
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DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
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PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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- [1](#)1. Global War on Terror
- [1](#)2. Mideast
- [1](#)3. Iran: Nuclear Program

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Key stories in the media:  
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Major media -- lead story in Ha'aretz (Hebrew Ed.) -- cited a report put out by the International Atomic Energy Agency, which found that Iran is attempting to expand its uranium enrichment program. The Jerusalem Post and other media quoted Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz as saying that he backs calls for the UN Security Council to block Iran's nuclear program.

Maariv quoted Acting PM Ehud Olmert as saying on Monday at a public meeting in Tel Aviv: " Hamas does not frighten us and does not threaten Israel's existence." Leading media cited Olmert's hope that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas will stay in office. Maariv, Ha'aretz, and Israel Radio quoted Olmert as saying that there is no disagreement between Israel and the US on diplomatic issues. Olmert was quoted as saying: "The US does not believe that aid should be given to those who are not prepared to acknowledge the existence of the State of Israel. We see eye-to-eye with the US regarding all aspects of the conduct [to be held] vis-a-vis Hamas, the PA and the Roadmap. There is not even a smidgen of misunderstanding, or dust of disagreement. The US insists on the fact that negotiations should not be conducted with those who do not want to make peace."

The Jerusalem Post quoted Foreign Ministry officials as saying that despite the EU's decision Monday to funnel some USD 143 million to the PA, Israel and Europe continue to have a common Hamas strategy.

Ha'aretz reported that Olmert will convene a special meeting today on Israel's bilateral relations with Russia. The newspaper quoted political sources in Jerusalem as saying that the discussion had been scheduled a long time ago and that it was a regular event. Nevertheless, they were quoted as saying that it now has added significance in light of Russia's increased involvement in the region. The Jerusalem Post reported that outgoing PA minister Muhammad Dahlan has denied involvement in an alleged plot -- reported in the Egyptian publication Radio & TV Magazine -- to assassinate Khaled Mashal, the head of Hamas's political bureau. The Jerusalem Post says that the Egyptian magazine is normally described as being reliable.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the Ports, Customs, and Free Zone Corporation, the parent company of Dubai Ports World, a Dubai-based firm at the center of a political storm in the US over the purchase of American ports, participates in the Arab boycott against Israel.

Israel Radio reported that today the Central Elections Committee will discuss a request from right-wing parties that the United Arab-List/Arab Movement for Renewal be barred from participating in the upcoming Knesset elections. The plaintiffs claim that the head of the list, Sheikh Ibrahim Sarsur, wants to turn Israel into a Muslim state. The radio quoted MK Ahmed Tibi, who is in charge of PR for the Arab list, as saying that, due to its hostility to Arabs and Muslims, the far right is trying to prevent true representation of the Israeli Arab public.

Yediot quoted former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Kurtzer as saying in an interview with the Council on Foreign Relations that Olmert's declarations regarding an additional withdrawal from the West Bank and about Israel's holding on to three settlement blocs were Sharon's views and that a majority of Israelis support this policy. [NB: The Council on Foreign Affairs' Internet item is dated February 10.]

The Jerusalem Post printed an extensive interview with Ambassador Henry A. Crumpton, the State Department's Coordinator for Counterterrorism, which focused on Hamas and Iran.

Citing AP, Ha'aretz reported that on Monday, Hamas leader Khaled Mashal discussed efforts to form a Palestinian government with Syrian FM Walid Moualem, telling reporters after the meeting that he met with Moualem for "consultations on political issues," and Syria's support for the Palestinians. Ha'aretz reported that a Mashal-led Hamas delegation will visit Moscow on Friday.

Yediot reported that on Monday, the High Court of Justice definitely ruled that the IDF's use of human shields -- dubbed "neighbor practice" -- is illegal.

Ha'aretz reported that a new inner circle of advisors headed by Tal Zilberstein, is surrounding Olmert, replacing Sharon's "ranch forum."

All media reported that former PM Ehud Barak has agreed to join the Labor Party campaign in some measure, despite the ongoing rift between him and party chairman Amir Peretz.

Ha'aretz quoted Dr. Riad Malki, the head of the Panorama Research Institute in Ramallah, as saying at a meeting organized by the Israel-Palestine Center for Information and Research (IPCRI) that, without anyone realizing it, the West Bank and Gaza Strip are being transformed into two separate entities.

The Jerusalem Post reported that tests conducted by Israel's veterinary services on samples of blood and saliva from livestock and dead wild fowl found in Gaza last week have proven negative, quelling fears of a possible outbreak of hoof and mouth disease and bird flu in Gaza.

Maariv reported that the Foreign Ministry has recently asked the Shin Bet to allow wealthy residents of Persian Gulf countries to visit Israel. The newspaper reported that the Shin Bet has not yet responded to the ministry's request.

Major media reported that on Monday, a joint Israeli-Jordanian team, sponsored by the Bridging the Rift foundation, set out in the Dead Sea to find new insights into the special life forms that thrive there. It is the first time such a joint team has come together to explore the Dead Sea, which borders both Israel and Jordan. Seawater will be sent for laboratory examinations in Israel, Jordan, and the American universities Stanford and Cornell. Yediot reported that in a few months, a delegation of Hollywood producers will visit Israel to check into the possibility of producing movies here. The Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles initiated the move.

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**1. Global War on Terror:**  
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Summary:  
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Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld wrote in the

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conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "While the enemy is skillful at manipulating the media and using the tools of communications to their advantage, we have

an advantage as well: truth is on our side, and, ultimately, truth wins out."

Block Quotes:

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"The Media War on Terror"

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld wrote in the

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conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (February 26): "Terrorists have skillfully adapted to fighting wars in today's media age, but, for the most part, America and the governments of the other democracies have not.... Free governments must make communications planning a central component of every aspect of this struggle. Indeed, the longer it takes to put a strategic communications framework into place, the more the vacuum will be filled by the enemy.... Government public affairs and public diplomacy efforts are slowly beginning to reorient staffing, schedules and bureaucratic culture to engage the full range of today's media. Still, government must develop the institutional capability to anticipate and act within the same news cycle.... We are fighting a war in which the survival of our way of life is at stake. And the center of gravity of that struggle is not just the battlefield. It is a test of wills and it will be won or lost in the court of global public opinion. While the enemy is skillful at manipulating the media and using the tools of communications to their advantage, we have an advantage as well: truth is on our side, and, ultimately, truth wins out."

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12. Mideast:

Summary:

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Liberal op-ed writer Ofer Shelach commented in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Olmert and his people aren't telling us who is relevant."

Uzi Arad, the Director of the Institute of Policy and Strategy at the Interdisciplinary Center, who was a senior advisor to former prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "the leaders of Hamas and Iran say in ways that cannot be misunderstood that their goal is to destroy Israel as a state.... But nothing will convince the people on the Left."

Gershon Baskin, the Co-Director of the Israel-Palestine Center for Information and Research (IPCRI), wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Here is what I believe can be a reasonable solution: Israel unilaterally withdraws behind the security barrier including all settlements east of the barrier."

Nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe editorialized: "The sudden change in Washington's stance [regarding the allocation of funds to the PA] speaks for itself."

Block Quotes:

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1I. "Like With Arik"

Liberal op-ed writer Ofer Shelach commented in the lead editorial of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (February 28): "Until recently, Israel pretended that Abu Mazen was the great hope ... not that we spoke with him, God forbid; there was nothing to talk about. He did bow under the double burden of chaos in Palestinian society and Israel's unrealistic demands.... There's only one thing that Olmert and his people -- exactly like Sharon and his governments -- aren't telling us: who is relevant then? They don't exactly intend to cope with the reality about which James Wolfensohn, the Quartet's Mideast envoy, warned: stopping the funding of the Palestinian Authority might cause its collapse within two weeks -- a collapse that would lead the entire region to a violent crisis."

II. "The Threats Are Indeed Real"

Uzi Arad, the Director of the Institute of Policy and Strategy at the Interdisciplinary Center, who was a senior advisor to former prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (February 28): "In his eulogy for Ro'i Rothberg [the murdered security officer of Kibbutz Nahal Oz at the Gaza border], exactly 50 years ago,

Moshe Dayan said that the people beyond the border were praying 'for our weakness so that they might tear us to shreds'.... Nowadays, the leaders of Hamas and Iran say in ways that cannot be misunderstood that their goal is to destroy Israel as a state. At the top of the website for Izz al-Din al-Qassam, Hamas's military wing, is a Star of David that fades away after a nuclear mushroom cloud rises up from inside it. But nothing will convince the people on the Left, who would prefer to shut their eyes to the threats and go so far as to chastise those whose sworn duty is to warn us. It is not with the profound hatred of Israel and Jews that they are trying to deal, but with the voice warning about dire consequences.... The decree of our generation is no different from the decree of the 1930s, 1950s or 1970s, and that is the tragic dimension of the 'choice of our life,' to quote Dayan. The challenge currently facing the government of Israel is to crystallize and to lead a multi-faceted strategy for dealing with the current threats. To do so with a level head and not flippantly; to do so while grounded in reality; and by utilizing all of Israel's might. That is the challenge, which is simultaneously both strategic and existential, to which we need to focus all of our capabilities."

### III. "How to Guard the Two-State Option"

Gershon Baskin, the Co-Director of the Israel-Palestine Center for Information and Research (IPCRI), wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (February 28): "It is time to admit that Israel and the Palestinians do not have the tools or ability to resolve, or even manage, the conflict by themselves. We need help, and the international community is the address to provide that help. Here is what I believe can be a reasonable solution: Israel unilaterally withdraws behind the security barrier including all settlements east of the barrier.... Israel turns to the Security Council and requests that the UN take responsibility for the areas from which Israel withdraws.... The Security Council creates a UN Interim Administration Mission with a four-year timetable. Its main task: to prepare the Palestinian territories for independence.... The remaining permanent-status issues (final borders, Jerusalem, refugees) would not be dealt with until the last year of the UN Interim Administration mission, as the mission would not be in the position to replace Palestinian negotiators; however, if conditions arose in which such negotiations were possible earlier, the mission would request that the Security Council convene in order to determine the best way to conduct them. With the establishment of the UN Interim Administration Mission, future control of the political process would be in the hands of the UN Security Council (to be expected as a reasonable international demand in exchange for its coming to the rescue). While this initiative ought to be launched and presented to the Security Council by Israel, it is essential that the Palestinian people back it.... On the positive side for the Palestinians, Israel would continue to withdraw, and to move settlements behind the security barrier. Palestine would reach independence in four years.... The Israeli occupation would essentially end and the Palestinian problem finally would be internationalized."

### IV. "'Misunderstandings With the US"

Nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe editorialized (February 28): "The sudden change in Washington's stance [regarding the allocation of funds to the PA] speaks for itself.... It surprised the [Israeli] government, which had hoped that Jerusalem and Washington would be united on the Hamas front. All of a sudden it turns out that there are disagreements that are worrying when one considers the future."

### 3. Iran: Nuclear Program:

#### Summary:

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "The announcement the Russian and Iranian governments made Sunday regarding their agreement in principle on the joint enrichment of uranium deserves a reserved welcome."

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "The problem is not, as US National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley responded [to the Russian-Iranian announcement], that 'the devil is in the details.'"

Block Quotes:

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I. "Suspicion Yet to Be Lifted"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (February 28): "The announcement the Russian and Iranian governments made Sunday regarding their agreement in principle on the joint enrichment of uranium deserves a reserved welcome.... It is ... important that the international community continue its meticulous surveillance of Iran's actions, thoroughly examine the details of the agreement, demand the renewal of piercing supervision of Iranian nuclear sites, and not drop the threat of sanctions -- just in case Tehran once again attempts to deceive its dialogue partners and continue down the dangerous path toward the bomb."

II. "Devilish Deal"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (February 28): "The announcement by the nuclear chiefs of Russia and Iran that they have reached a tentative agreement is grounds for concern rather than relief. The problem is not, as US National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley responded, that 'the devil is in the details.' In this case, the devil is in any agreement that gives the illusion of resolving a crisis, thereby sparing a no less dangerous Iranian regime from international sanctions. The deal in question is based on a Russian offer to enrich uranium in Russia and deliver it to Tehran, as a way of ensuring that Iran will not be able to itself produce bomb-grade material and build a nuclear weapon. Europe and, surprisingly, the US have supported such a plan in principle.... Iran represents the greatest test of the international community's willingness and ability to protect itself since 9/11. There is no option of being satisfied with pretend solutions that the regime will rightly portray as diplomatic victories, and that do not fundamentally change Iran's behavior, let alone free the Iranian people from the grip of extremist clerical rule. The international community's objective must be to, as the first operative sentence of the UN Charter states: 'take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression ...' Only by imposing draconian multilateral non-military sanctions now is there a possibility of avoiding the need for military actions in the near future."

JONES